

HAWAI'I QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS)?

A: The HQAS offers qualified sign language interpreters who do not hold national certification an opportunity to obtain credentials valid within and recognized by the State of Hawaii. The system establishes interpreting and transliterating standards at various skill levels. Legislative authority for the credentialing of interpreters via a State screening process is contained in Hawaii Revised Statutes 348F-3(3).



The HQAS is based on the Kansas Quality Assurance Screening (KQAS), which has a 15-year history of validity and reliability. The KQAS is currently in use in 10 states, primarily in the Mid-America region.

Q: What is HQAS+H?

A: The HQAS offers an optional local language competency test to assess the interpreter's knowledge of Hawaii Creole English, referred to as Pidgin. The +H accompanies the standard HQAS and is designed to assess an interpreter's local language competency with both spoken and sign language styles common in Hawaii.

Q: Who should take the test? Why?

A: The HQAS is intended for interpreters who plan to work professionally within the State of Hawaii. It should not be used by sign language students who wish to assess their progress. In Hawaii, most State and city/county agencies that employ interpreters establish contract pay rates based on the interpreter's verified skill level. An HQAS credential identifies you as a qualified professional.

Q: Is there a difference in testing fees for the HQAS or HQAS+H credential?

A: No, the test is \$200.

Q: Will my Hawaii credential be recognized on the mainland?

A: The HQAS is intended for local interpreters who plan to work within the State of Hawaii. Some states and jurisdictions may recognize your HQAS credential depending on their reciprocity regulations. Interpreters who intend to work primarily on the mainland should pursue national certification by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or by the National Association of the Deaf.

Q: How is the HQAS and HQAS+H test structured?

A: The HQAS system consists of a pre-test workshop, a written test, and a performance test. The performance test is divided into two parts; one part demonstrates the candidate's interpreting skills (ASL to English, English to ASL), and the other part demonstrates the candidate's transliterating skills (Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE) a.k.a. PSE).

The HQAS+H performance test demonstrates the candidate's interpreting skills (ASL to English/Pidgin and Pidgin to ASL).

Q: What is the pre-test workshop?

A: HQAS test administrators and guest lecturers offer an all day workshop the day before the performance test. This workshop is designed to give candidates an opportunity to experience the test environment, ask questions, and to become comfortable with the process. The workshop is not intended to teach sign language or interpreting skills. We strongly encourage all applicants to participate in the pre-test workshop, even candidates who take the test for a second or third time.

Q: How is the written test administered?

A: Complete the Candidate's Application, sign it, and submit it along with payment to the Disability and Communication Access Board Office in Honolulu. The written test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions related to interpreting ethics and practices. The HQAS Interpreter Code of Ethics was adopted by the Disability and Communication Access Board on October 19, 2000 and is printed in the HQAS informational brochure.

Q: Where and when do I take the written test?

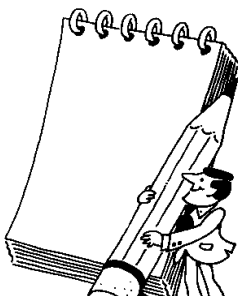
A: The written test is offered on the afternoon of the same day as the pre-test workshop. The pre-test workshop and written test are scheduled the day before the performance test. Test dates are scheduled as needed, usually once per calendar quarter based on the applications submitted.

Q: How do I know if I passed the written test?

A: HQAS test administrators will score the test immediately after all candidates have completed the test. You may wait at the test site or staff can call or email you with the results by the next working day.

Q: What if I fail the written test?

A: You must pass the written test before taking the performance test. You are allowed three attempts to pass the written test before your application for the performance test is denied. HQAS test



administrators will work cooperatively with you to schedule additional opportunities to take the written test.

We strongly encourage all candidates to complete appropriate classes in interpreting ethics and practices before attempting the test.

Q: When can I retake the written test if I fail?

A: You may retake the written test on the day of the next pre-test workshop.

Q: Has the written test been field-tested?

A: Yes. It was given in different types of college classes at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, at Johnson Community College, and at Iowa Western Community College. At all testing sites, good reliability and validity were demonstrated. Task force members were assured that potential applicants could not simply guess and get enough answers correct to pass.

Q: Is there a warm up before the performance evaluation?

A: Yes. There are warm up tapes that accompany each of the actual tapes used for the evaluation. The deaf models on the warm up tapes are the same people used in the performance test. The candidate will have an opportunity to practice with the warm up tapes.

Q: What is the format of the performance test videotapes?

A: Each HQAS performance test includes one tape for transliterating (Sign) and another tape for interpreting (ASL). Each tape consists of four sections including sign to voice, interactive, and voice to sign.

The HQAS+H performance test consists of four sections (sign to voice, interactive, voice to sign).

Q: Who will be evaluating the performance test?

A: Every performance test will be reviewed by six trained evaluators. All evaluators have received appropriate training and are drawn from the local community.

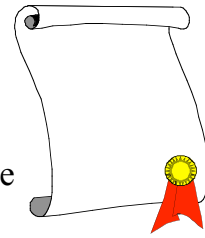
Because we are a small state, the names of the evaluators are confidential. Evaluators will recuse themselves if they have any conflict of interest, personal relationship with candidate, or for any other reason they cannot offer a fair and impartial evaluation.

Q: How will I be rated on the performance evaluation?

A: Evaluators use a score sheet to rate your skills according to several different criteria. Scores from all evaluators will be averaged.

Q: How will I know what level I achieved?

A: You will be notified by letter, ten to twelve weeks after you take the performance test. Candidates will receive a profile of their scores. A profile shows the candidate, which skills and features are strongest and which are weakest. For candidates who achieve Level II or higher, DCAB will issue a wallet card listing your name and level.



Q: Will adequate safeguards be established to ensure that the HQAS will be fairly administered?

A: Yes. The test system has been shown to be valid and reliable. If scores returned by the evaluators vary significantly, performance videotapes will be reviewed by additional evaluators.

Q: When may I apply for a new test or a retest?

A: Please see the Retest Waiting Periods listed on the HQAS application. Generally, candidates are asked to take some time to work on improving their skills before re-testing. Everyone has a bad day. If you scored significantly below your actual ability, work with a qualified mentor to polish any rough spots and then reapply.

If you qualified at a Level II and wish to attempt a Level III or higher, you may reapply after six months or three months if requested by a qualified mentor. You will be given priority scheduling if possible.

You will be responsible to pay the candidate's test fee each time you take a performance test. You will not be required to take the written test again unless your credential has expired or the written test has been revised.

Q: What is the Recommended Fee Schedule for sign language interpreters?

A: Chapter 11-218, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), established by the DCAB, contains a recommended fee schedule for sign language interpreters for use by State of Hawaii agencies. To review Chapter 11-218, HAR, please contact the Communication Access Specialist at phone, (808) 586-8130 TTY or email, dcab@doh.hawaii.gov. The rules are also posted online at <http://www.hawaii.gov/health/dcab>.

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